

CLAIMS:-

Sub A1 1. Apparatus for assessing the condition of a person support surface (12) which comprises a frame (A) for extending over the support surface, an indenter (5) mounted on said frame and a load sensor (4) disposed between the indenter and the frame, means for pressing the indenter into the support surface, displacement measuring means for measuring the movement of the indenter into the support surface and data processing means for analysing the force applied to the indenter in relation to the displacement of the indenter into the support surface, characterised in that the apparatus is mobile and includes manually actuated means (6) for pressing the indenter into the support surface.

2. Apparatus according to claim 1 wherein the frame is supported in cantilever from one side of the support surface.

Sub A2 3. Apparatus according to claim 1 or 2 wherein the frame includes means (3) for removable attachment to a bed base for supporting a mattress.

4. Apparatus according to claim 2 wherein the frame is supported from a base member (42) adapted to extend beneath a bed base, while said frame is adapted to extend in cantilever over a mattress supported on said bed base.

5. Apparatus according to any one of the preceding claims wherein said manually operated means comprises a handle (6) for depressing the indenter into the support surface.

Sub A2 6. Apparatus according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the indenter (5) comprises a curved surface mounted for rotational movement on said frame.

7. Apparatus according to claim 6 wherein the curved surface comprises a wheel or sphere (5).

8. Apparatus according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the frame comprises a parallelogram linkage (1,21,22).

9. Apparatus according to any one of the preceding claims wherein said processing means (7) includes means for assigning an identifying code to the support surface to be tested and for preparing a label bearing said code and data relating to the behaviour of the mattress when tested.

10. A method of testing a mattress (12) in situ on a bed base (11,41) which comprises applying to the surface of the mattress an indenter (5), depressing the indenter into the mattress, measuring the displacement of the indenter as a function of the load applied to the indenter, constructing a load/displacement curve (51) and discriminating the displacement arising from deflection of the bed base to thereby identify the load/displacement relationship of the mattress.